

# The Need To Be More Professional . . . Whatever That Means

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*Recent years have found the traditional ideas of professionalism, particularly, military professionalism, in a state of conceptual and semantic confusion. In response to this state of affairs, the military has turned away from the fundamental elements of its own profession and has instead sought to solve its problems through civilian academia, using the tools of contemporary economics and social sciences. Society demands of every profession some useful and specialized service, and in the case of the military it calls for command—advice and/or action in the military sphere of international politics—a service that can only be diluted as the source of its professional knowledge moves farther from the center of more traditional military thinking.*

Perhaps the most overused and least understood accolades currently in vogue are those which relate to the idea of professionalism. Particularly in the military, there is a sense of belonging to a profession, having the responsibilities and prerogatives of a profession, but at the same time accepting almost no consensus as to what the profession or professional behavior involves.<sup>1</sup> Semantic problems aside, it seems painfully apparent that we are unable to agree on the fundamental concepts that determine who and what we are.

I am sure most military officers accept the idea that the profession of arms, whatever it is, is not an end in itself. It must relate in some way to the larger American society and should therefore be considered in the same light as society considers other professions. The sociological study of the professions or professionalization is relatively new, and because of the dynamic nature of the ideas and attitudes associated with the word profession, there is no generally accepted definition that is sufficiently precise. However, some standard or ideal is necessary if we are to evaluate various manifestations referred to as professional.

Sociologists tend to write about the specific differences between professional and nonprofessional behavior rather than describe any set of absolute characteristics which would define a professional. In other words, professionalism is a matter of degree. In an article entitled "Some Problems in the

Sociology of the Professions," Bernard Barber presents four essential attributes that can be used to evaluate professional behavior:

1. Primary orientation to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest. . .
2. A high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge. . .
3. A high degree of self-control of behavior through codes of ethics. . .
4. A system of rewards that is primarily a set of symbols of work achievement. . .<sup>2</sup>

Everett C. Hughes, who has been teaching in the field of professions for over 25 years, expands on these attributes in an article by the same title:

A profession delivers esoteric services—advice or action or both—to individuals . . . or governments; to groups of people or to the public at large . . . .

The nature of the knowledge . . . on which advice and action are based is not always clear; it is often a mixture of several kinds of practical and theoretical knowledge. But it is part of the professional . . . claim, that the practice should rest upon some branch of knowledge to which the professionals are privy by virtue of long study and by initiation and apprenticeship under masters already members of the profession.<sup>3</sup>

The self-governing codes of ethics established by professions are designed to improve the quality of service rendered and also to protect the professionals since at times they must depart from socially acceptable conduct in the application of their skills. Since, theoretically, the client is not competent to judge the performance of the professional, he accepts self-policing based on the high ethical standards imposed by the internal professional code. Hughes characterizes this relationship as one of *credat emptor* instead of *caveat emptor*.<sup>4</sup> On the subject of rewards, Barber points out that because money income is primarily a means to the end of individual self-interest, it is less important to a professional than such symbols of achievement as awards, rank, and general prestige within the community. (Assuming, of course,

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that the reward system includes sufficient monetary income for the style of life appropriate to the honor bestowed.)<sup>5</sup>

From this discussion of professional attributes, two critical relationships can be discerned. One is the relationship between a profession and the larger community it serves, and the other is the relationship among individuals within the profession. Since the professional cannot influence the first relationship except by affecting the quality of his service, the US military officer must increase his degree of professionalism if he expects to be able to fulfill the obligations he assumed with his oath of office. Energies to increase professionalism must be concentrated in the areas of professional knowledge and skill and in the ethical dimension of the military profession. Such a prescription raises a new set of questions which, for the sake of this examination, will be discussed under the headings of scholarship and discipline.

### Scholarship

We found from previous discussions that professional knowledge must be highly generalized and systematic, and it must lend itself to intellectual activity and development. Furthermore, although an exact description of the knowledge is not always clear, it is often a mixture of the practical and theoretical and usually derives from long study and apprenticeship under masters in the profession. But beyond these vague generalities, what are the unique and esoteric services rendered by the military profession to the government or to the public at large? What are the services that allow us to call ourselves professional?

In his book, *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel P. Huntington suggested that the distinct sphere of military competence that distinguishes most officers from most civilians is the management of violence.<sup>6</sup> He expanded on this distinctive characteristic with: "The direction, operation and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence is the peculiar skill of the officer."<sup>7</sup> A similar description of the military profession is provided by a soldier. "The essential basis of the military life is the ordered application of force under an unlimited liability."<sup>8</sup> Both of these definitions can be summed up as the exercise of command. Since staffs are supposed to be extensions of their commander, the exercise of command can be taken to include all the many specialized areas of knowledge that must be considered when making command decisions. This function of the military professional is not limited to the command of forces in combat but includes providing advice to the civilian officials in our national government. By virtue of his qualifications to command armed forces in combat, the military officer is uniquely competent to advise decision makers concerning the capabilities and limitations of the various forms of military force. Furthermore, to be useful to society, this advice must be considered *before* the decision is made to employ force of arms, not after the fact. Therefore the military professional must have the confidence of his government if his professional advice is to be useful. If, then,

the esoteric services—advice, action, or both—of the military profession are defined as including all those activities embraced by the term "exercise of command," the knowledge upon which this practice is based must be an integrated whole with the idea of command as the integrating principle. It is my contention that since World War II it is precisely this integrating principle that has been missing in our pursuit of the formal knowledge applicable to our profession.

Masland and Radway documented what they referred to as a trend away from the traditional functions of military officers in 1957:

Within the last generation these traditional functions . . . have been modified in two fundamental ways. First, officers have become increasingly concerned with international affairs, this is to say, with the premises of military policy, with the purposes for which and the terms on which military forces will be deployed . . . Second, their support functions—supply, finance, research and development, public relations, manpower management, and the like—have grown more numerous, difficult, and important.<sup>9</sup>

In the face of a revolution in technology, the military has turned to natural scientists for help and encourages its own officers to become scientists and engineers. Starting with a reputation for unimaginative resistance to changing technology before World War II, the military establishment made an effort to cope with accelerating change.

In the face of the people-related problems associated with maintaining a relatively large, authoritarian military organization in the midst of a democratic society, the behavioral scientists were consulted. Military officers were encouraged to do advanced study in such disciplines as sociology, psychology, and management. However, most social scientists have a deep-seated antimilitarist bias. They consider the presence of organized violence as an element in international relations as a throwback to barbarism. This bias is evident in the major work that has been done in military sociology. Morris Janowitz prefers the term *military manager* to *commander*, and in his proposed constabulary concept he advocates a commitment to the minimum use of force.<sup>10</sup> But Janowitz himself recognized the essential difference between the professional soldier (used generically) and the society lie is sworn to serve:

In the long run, the military establishment cannot be controlled and still remain effective by civilianizing it. Despite the growth of the logistical dimensions of warfare, the professional soldier is, in the last analysis, a military commander and not a business or organizational administrator. The democratic elite model of civilian supremacy must proceed on the assumption that the function of the professional military are to command soldiers into battle . . .

. . . To achieve the objectives of the democratic elite model, it is necessary to maintain and build on the differentiation between civilian and military roles. A democratic society must accord the professional soldier a position based on his skill and on his special code of honor. He must be integrated because his fundamental differentiation is recognized.<sup>11</sup>

As the cost of maintaining the large military establishment continued to rise exponentially, civilian authorities turned to

economists for guidance in the allocation of increasingly limited resources. The military, in response, turned to the study of defense systems analysis. As the leading civilian practitioner of this art described its salient features:

The problem of choosing strategies and weapon systems is a unique problem requiring a method of its own. It is obviously not Physics or Engineering or Mathematics or Psychology or Diplomacy or Economics, nor is it entirely a problem in military operations though it involves elements of all of the above. Because it involves a synthesis of the above-mentioned disciplines and others, it requires the cooperation of experts in all of these professions and many others.<sup>12</sup>

After eight years of forceful effort to provide this necessary synthesis, the intellectual discipline of the economists had sharply limited success. Indeed, the limitations of economic theory, when applied in its own area of competence, should have alerted the defense systems analysts to the problems of applying this same theory to military problems. Apparently, however, the economists were concentrating more on their capabilities than on their limitations. David Halberstam, in his book, *The Best and the Brightest*, describes what he considers to be the intellectual arrogance of Secretary McNamara:

He became the principal desk officer on Vietnam in 1962 because he felt that the President needed his help. He knew nothing about Asia, about poverty, about people, about American domestic politics, but he knew a great deal about production technology and about exercising bureaucratic power. He was classically a corporate man; had it been a contest between the United States and Hanoi as to which side could produce the most goods for the peasants of South Vietnam, clearly we would have won. If it had been just a matter of getting the right goods to the right villages we would have won; unfortunately, what we were selling was not what they were buying.<sup>13</sup>

An article in *Time* magazine was more compassionate in assessing McNamara's motivation.

Despite his hawkish pronouncements he was essentially a reflective and circumspect man. He profoundly feared the outbreak of World War III, and this guided him in many of his decisions . . . He wanted to have it both ways: victory and humanity. . . . Columnist Joe Alsop pronounced him a splendid "defense minister" but lacking the innate toughness required in a "war minister". . . . Throughout his career as Defense Secretary, McNamara the technician seemed to be at war with McNamara the humanist. . . . Probably no humanist could have brought the Pentagon under control and no technocrat could conduct the Vietnam War.<sup>14</sup>

This recent experience, as well as the experience of the past 30 years, tends to support the contention that in the approach to primarily military problems the integrating principle should be primarily military. We have been reacting to change and experimenting with alternative approaches for over 25 years. After two limited wars, many crises, and much dialogue, the time seems right to reestablish the military leadership in the intellectual activities of our own profession. But how do we renew military scholarship?

In his book, *Military Concepts and Philosophy*, Rear Adm Henry Eccles presents a plan that seems to me to be a reasonable approach to professional knowledge.<sup>15</sup> He begins with a return to the traditional terminology such as *strategy*,

*logistics*, *tactics*, and *command*, while at the same time highlighting the semantic difficulties inherited since 1945. This approach has the advantage of providing continuity between modern and historical military studies and requires the student to redefine terms to express new forms of old ideas. In this system such broad concepts as strategy, logistics, and tactics include the study of related subjects such as foreign policy, resource allocation, and weapons technology, but the orientation is military. Eccles's approach also provides for the study of intangible aspects of the profession under the headings of leadership, morale, and discipline. Behavioral science can make contributions here, but the perspective must be from the point of view of the commander.

This systematic approach also visualizes a continuing growth and development, both for the individual professional and the professional body of knowledge. By the time a man reaches flag or general officer rank, he is properly prepared to be a *generalist*, fully aware of the relationships among the many specialties involved in his particular fund of professional knowledge. Only then is the military professional competent to offer advice in the top-level decision-making process. On this subject Admiral Eccles has the following to say:

Finally, the whole essence of the military art comes to a climactic focus in high-level political-military decision. This problem of decision has been grossly underestimated by politicians, scholars, scientists and by most military professionals. The methods of planning and decision, the criteria of judgment, and the casual ethics that are adequate for the relatively modest risks of most business and domestic political decisions are utterly inadequate for the critical political-military decisions of today's harsh world of conflict. The military professional must not abdicate his responsibility for intellectual leadership in this vital matter.<sup>16</sup>

The major obstacle to a program such as that proposed by Admiral Eccles is the inertia, both dynamic and static, associated with contemporary thinking. Existing dynamic inertia is represented by those who, rather than seeking to develop a distinctive body of applicable military knowledge, are frantically scrambling for more and more formal (civilian) education and, incidentally, for the certificates with which they can document their scramble. The civilian scholar can be expected to react to a call for the development of a body of professional military knowledge with the criticism that anything along these lines would be superficial and not sufficiently rigorous to qualify as professional. Indeed, G. J. Marcus, in the preface of his book, *The Age of Nelson*, takes note of this consistent tendency with a quote attributed to Michael Oppenheim, a naval historian of an earlier era. "The clever men at Oxford know all there is to be known." Consequently, says Marcus, anything which they do not happen to know, such as naval history, is plainly not knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Static inertia is generally represented by senior military officers who do not believe that a problem exists. We have been teaching strategy, tactics, and logistics in our military schools for over a century. It is true that we possess a set of categories that could be developed into a proper body of pro-

fessional knowledge, but this goal has not been realized because we have been busying ourselves in civilian academia. Note, for example, the apparent lack of consciousness among senior officers of all services that they are practicing a unified skill, one which grows with education, age, experience, and rank, until the specialties merge into a “climactic focus” at the political-military decision-making level. The colonel in Ward Just’s book, *Military Men*, was hardly professional in the sense discussed above if he believed that “his thing” was to be expert in the art of small-unit infantry tactics and “killing VC.”<sup>18</sup> To the extent that this type of mentality is representative of senior officers in any service, we have work to do in the area of military scholarship. Henry Eccles quotes Admiral Sims on this same theme in an address Sims gave at the Naval War College in 1919: “. . . An officer may be highly successful and even brilliant in all grades up to the responsible positions of high command and then find his mind almost wholly unprepared to perform its vitally important function in time of war.”<sup>19</sup>

## Discipline

To many the word discipline is synonymous with punishment, and military discipline conjures up all that is least attractive about the military establishment. As used here the word simply refers to a code of rules governing the conduct of individuals in the practice of their profession, a code not unlike the discipline an athlete submits to in order to achieve effective control of physical activity or the mental discipline required of the scientist or other serious scholar. Military discipline in this context can be equated to that “high degree of self-control of behavior through codes of ethics” spoken of by Barber. The purpose of these self-governing codes is to maintain or improve the quality of service to the larger community and also to protect practicing professionals when, in the performance of duty, they are required to depart from socially acceptable conduct.

Recalling Hackett’s definition of the essence of the military profession as the “ordered application of force under an unlimited liability,” we can appreciate the full significance of military discipline in all its applications.\* If the use of force is to be ordered, the process also includes rational decision making and positive control. This presupposes effective leadership. But to be effective in a democratic society, military leadership must inspire and maintain the confidence of subordinates in the skill and character of their leaders. Furthermore, when we consider that the whole “killing business” is hardly socially acceptable, it is plain that only by adherence to a strict code of ethics can the military profession expect any moral support from the society at large. (“Holy wars” are an exception to this rule because society itself loses its sense of balance and restraint.) The professional is allowed to do what he thinks best only to the extent that society is convinced he is operating in accordance with

an ethical standard more demanding than that which society demands of itself. This special trust and confidence is not a constant. Hughes tells us:

. . . every profession considers itself the proper body to set the terms in which some aspect of society, life or nature is to be thought of and define the general lines, or even the details, of public policy concerning it. The mandate to do so is granted more fully to some professions than to others; in time of crisis it may be questioned even with regard to the most respected and powerful professions.<sup>20</sup>

Because so much is at stake for a society when it is faced with accepting or rejecting the advice of its military professionals, the special trust and confidence implied by the term “credat emptor” will be granted to our profession only if our fellow citizens and their representatives have confidence in our integrity.

The liberal intellectual community within our society has always harbored a basic distrust of “militarism,” and various manifestations of a lack of discipline on our part have reinforced this traditional distrust. In his book, *War and Politics*, Bernard Brodie, referred to in the dust jacket as “the Dean of American Civilian Strategists,” devotes his last 17 pages to a less than flattering portrayal of the military profession. The senior officers of the services, according to Brodie, run curiously to type:

Its members [the military profession] . . . must be both able and eager to accept discipline and obedience in matters great and small, and yet at the same time must cultivate the capacity to command. . . . Certainly a reputation for high intelligence is a positive factor in promotion. However . . . [it] must not be at the cost of other traits, which because they are deemed at least commensurate in importance with intelligence really outweigh it.<sup>21</sup>

Brodie sees the professional military officer as self-serving, vain (“I have never observed in any other group besides the military such a tolerance of bragging”),<sup>22</sup> and possessing a dangerous bellicosity: “(the soldier has) a great belief in the efficacy of force in dealing with recalcitrant peoples or regimes abroad.”<sup>23</sup> In summarizing the professional military viewpoint as he sees it, Brodie has this to say:

We see that the whole training of the military is toward a set of values that finds in battle and in victory a vindication. The skills developed in the soldier are those of the fighter, and not of the reflector on ultimate purposes. . . . All this is fitted into a simplistic vision of the world and of what makes it function. The enemy—especially if he represents a somewhat different culture and is thus by definition barbaric—understands nothing but superior force. He understands it more clearly if it is applied than if it is merely threatened.<sup>24</sup>

Another civilian writing almost 40 years ago described what he thought the military profession should be:

Every war is fought, every army is maintained in a military way and in a militaristic way. The distinction is fundamental and fateful. The military way is marked by a primary concentration of men and material on winning specific objectives of power with the utmost efficiency, that is, with the least expenditure of blood and treasure. It is limited in scope, confined to one function, and scientific in its essen-

\*The most basic and obvious application is to enable men to go forward under fire in the face of “unlimited liability.”

tial qualities. Militarism, on the other hand, presents a vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions and thought associated with armies and wars and yet transcending true military purposes. . . . Rejecting the scientific character of the military way, militarism displays the qualities of caste and cult, authority and belief.<sup>25</sup>

Alfred Vagts, in 1937, shared the belief of most Western intellectuals that the *up-to-date, efficient, rational* approach to problems combined with the *commonsense* of enlightened individuals was a more promising path to progress for humanity, even in matters of war and peace, than was any outdated faith in institutions. Paradoxically, it was precisely because of the influence of these ideas and the experiences of World War II that the military profession has tended to move away from what is best in its own traditional values and toward the unattractive characteristics which Brodie decries 40 years later. In his discussion of the role played by the top level US military leaders in World War II, Huntington suggests how the trend away from traditional military values got started:

The wartime power of the military leaders was rooted in the American liberal attitude toward war and the military. War was sharply differentiated from peace. When the nation went to war, it went wholeheartedly, turning the direction of the conflict over to those who made that their business. . . . The military became the executors of the national will, the technicians called in to implement the basic policy decision. . . . Their function was not to provide for the military security of the country in war and peace, but simply to achieve victory in war.<sup>26</sup>

Concerning the military role in determining the grand strategy of the war, Huntington has the following to say:

A remarkable harmony prevailed in the high councils of the American government as to the basic strategy of the war. . . . The civilian and military approaches to national policy had been poles apart in the 1930s. The united front achieved during the war meant either the political leadership abandoned their positions and accepted the military outlook or that the military leaders dropped their professional conservatism and adhered to the prevailing American civilian viewpoint. One widely accepted school of thought argues for the former. . . . It is impossible to accept the conclusions of this school of thought. The critics are, of course, correct in saying that America's overriding goal in the war was military victory. They go astray, however, when they say that this goal had its roots in military thinking. . . . The professional military mind is concerned with military security not military victory.<sup>27</sup>

While this last statement can certainly be disputed today, as Brodie does, better reasons to dispute it can be found than those presented by our civilian critics.

Not only were our senior professionals in World War II carried far afield from their traditional set of values in matters of strategy, but this trend can be noted in the areas of logistics and tactics as well. Before the United States could bring its military power to bear, it had to solve a massive logistics problem. The quantity and variety of material that had to be produced and transported required the total mobilization of the nation. Furthermore, once the material and human resources were massed at the point of employment, an aroused society could find no good excuse for restraint in their use. Expediency prevailed not only in logistics but tac-

tics as well. The principle of "mass" as it applied to the use of firepower led very logically and rationally to the direct and deliberate attack of noncombatants under the guise of "strategic bombing"—a practice that had traditionally been held to be unethical by the military profession.

As the dependence on mass became ingrained in a generation of officers, the complementary value of the fighting spirit of the individual soldier tended to be overlooked. The importance of traditional military discipline was deemphasized. Recruiting efforts after World War II, as in the current all-volunteer force environment, stressed the educational and recreational advantages of military service. When the young men who responded to these lures had to face the hard test of combat in Korea and later in Vietnam, they were largely ill-prepared. The exceptions to this general statement were members of the limited number of division-size organizations which continued to place a premium on individual and unit discipline. The value of this emphasis was demonstrated not only by the capability of men to face the rigors of combat or a prisoner of war (POW) compound but also by their ability to exercise restraint in the application of force. My Lai was a dramatic example of what can happen in the absence of such discipline.

Whether it be to counter the myth that the military profession stresses violence as a diplomatic tool or to be able to lead men effectively in battle, we must demonstrate our awareness of and adherence to traditional values and a disciplined way of life. Vagts tells us that this traditional military zeal is related to feudalism or, more precisely, to the medieval ideals of chivalry. These ideals were applications of Christian principles designed to limit the violence of warfare and minimize the suffering of its victims. After World War II, Vagts acknowledged this phenomenon:

Whether or not it was simply estate egotism—supranationally prevailing postfeudal chivalrousness—rather than humanitarianism, working its course in unsuspected ways as a code largely unwritten, that kept war as competition within bounds, certain things were simply not done in war. Increasingly, however, the list of taboos became shorter, the authors of such breaches of the rules of war proving most often bourgeois and proletarian civilians, trying to achieve breakthroughs to more total, more absolute war. While such attempts had been advocated and made as during the American and French revolutions, officers as professional war-makers have usually succeeded in channeling war back in the dikes of custom.<sup>28</sup>

Clausewitz's description of the *esprit de corps* that should exist in every army is another aspect of the traditional military ideal. This is especially true of standing armies which cannot always expect to be caught up in great national crusades:

An Army which preserves its formations under the heaviest fire . . . is never shaken by imaginary fears . . . in the face of real danger disputes the ground inch by inch . . . is proud in the feeling of its victories, never loses its sense of obedience, its respect for and confidence in its leaders, even under the depressing effects of defeat . . . is accustomed to privations and fatigue by exercise . . . looks upon all its toils as the means of victory . . . is always reminded of its

duties and virtues by one idea, namely the *honor of its arms* such an army is imbued with the true military spirit.<sup>29</sup>

Such virtues can only be developed in young, individualistic American recruits by intelligent and inspiring leadership, a requirement that sets the military leader apart from his followers. We saw this in our own Civil War.

Nothing of General Grant's ultimate success as a military leader was evident by civilian standards in peacetime. In fact, he was the classic example of the soldier who "couldn't make it on the outside." Bruce Catton, in his biography of Grant, tells how he appeared to Governor Yates of Illinois at the beginning of the Civil War:

It was precisely the well-qualified Captain Grant who didn't appear interested [in becoming a colonel of volunteers]. He remained a civilian . . . quietly and competently doing his job but displaying no ambition whatever. . . . Actually the governor had misinterpreted things. A friend of Grant's set him straight. He pointed out that Captain Grant was a regular army man by training and personally diffident to boot. In his book, officers were never "candidates" for anything, didn't get elected to anything, and never asked favors of politicians. If there was a job for this man to do the governor could just appoint him without asking him about it.<sup>30</sup>

When he was given a job—a troublesome regiment of volunteers—"Grant just moved in and took charge and made them like it. Apparently there was something about the man. . . ."<sup>31</sup> At the end of the war this professional soldier wrote into the terms of surrender that the officers and men of the Confederate Army were to sign paroles, and then they were to go home, "not to be disturbed by the United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they reside."<sup>32</sup> In the face of political pressure to the contrary, U. S. Grant had given his word on the chivalrous treatment of a defeated enemy.

The officer whose surrender Grant accepted at Appomattox was another professional soldier of the traditional mold. As reported by Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's farewell order to the Army of Northern Virginia captures the intangible values that motivate such men and cannot be taken from them even in defeat:

You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that the Merciful God will extend to You His blessing and protection. With an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your Country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration for myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.<sup>33</sup>

This type of idealism is not an anachronism. It is still recognized as necessary in order to develop the confidence followers need if they are to practice the military virtues described by Clausewitz. On the subject of military leadership, the *Marine Corps Manual* makes the following points:

Leadership qualities include . . . personal example of high moral standards . . . technical proficiency . . . [and] moral responsibility . . . [for the] guidance of subordinates toward wholeness of mind and body. Each officer must endeavor . . . to develop within himself those qualities of leadership, including industry, justice, self-control, unselfishness, honor and courage, which will fit him to be a real leader of men. . . . The presumption of integrity, good manners,

sound judgment and discretion, which is the basis for the special trust and confidence reposed in each officer, is jeopardized by the slightest transgression on the part of any member of the officer corps.<sup>34</sup>

Junior officers are to be closely supervised to ensure that their conduct measures up to these standards, and senior officers are expected to personify these qualities as a natural result of their years of formation and development.

Unfortunately, there are certain trends observable within the officer corps today that are moving it away from this traditional ideal rather than toward it. Not only are officers acquiring advanced degrees in civilian academic disciplines, but they also appear to be accepting some of the civilian measures of success in their profession. Is "getting ahead" an end in itself or a result of successful professional development? Is the quest for command motivated by the ideal of service, or has it become more of an exercise in getting one's "promotion ticket punched"? In our efforts to attract and keep talent, we have accepted another civilian assumption, that bright young men will only be satisfied in this profession if they are promised rapid advancement ahead of their contemporaries. In spite of the acknowledged difficulties of evaluating in peacetime the kind of talent that will be useful in wartime, we still insist on pursuing the accelerated promotion policies of the youth cult. In the process we are being unfair to the very officers we are trying to encourage. We are denying them an opportunity to mature and develop in knowledge and wisdom in each rank so that when they finally attain the rank of senior military adviser to the commander in chief, the quality of their advice will, in fact, meet the requirements of what Henry Eccles calls the "climactic focus in high level political-military decision." There has also been a gradual cheapening of our awards system. Awards now seem to increase with rank, but do we really need such a proliferation of colored ribbon if we are true professionals? Isn't promotion itself sufficient reward for performance? Another embarrassing question might revolve around the distribution of rewards, especially in peacetime. Is a company or battalion commander as likely to be recognized for the successful execution of his duties as an aide or staff officer of the same rank? The opposite of professional idealism is careerism. How can we expect followers to have confidence in an example of self-serving pragmatism instead of selfless devotion to duty? The only known cure is self-discipline.

## Summary and Conclusion

In a letter on the subject of professionalism in 1970, General Chapman, then commandant of the Marine Corps, said: ". . . professionalism [is] made up of many things, but it [is] grounded in the belief that high standards in performance and discipline are vital to battlefield success."<sup>35</sup> The specific nature of the performance and discipline that society demands from our profession is a complex mixture of action and advice. Success, in turn, depends on an appreciation of a great variety of formal knowledge, much of which has

changed radically since World War II. It also depends on the acceptance of a standard of conduct more demanding than that which society demands of itself. The unifying principle in this ideal of professionalism is the perspective of the commander. Only from this perspective can one appreciate the especially demanding self-discipline required either to make a decision involving the lives of men in combat or to give sound advice to the national command authority involving the employment of military force to further national interests.

The process of growth and development toward this professional ideal—one that can never be fully realized—takes time and effort, and its progress should be somehow related to the rank attained by individuals involved in it. Rank should reflect an officer's professional competence not only in terms of seniority, but in terms of education, experience, and overall ability as well.<sup>36</sup> A man who seeks additional responsibility and rank must demonstrate growth in knowledge, maturity, integrity, and wisdom. He must take the time to learn, to digest knowledge, and then to apply it.

Some may view this development of military professionalism as being essentially at odds with the liberal society it seeks to serve, where the "good" words are *freedom, rational, progressive, efficient, and liberal*. By implication, the "bad" words are *authority, romantic, traditional, idealistic, and conservative*. Obviously the real world of people and situations is some blend of these contrasts, but I think that our esteem for intellectuals and a liberal education should be tempered with the realization that there is an arrogance of intellectuality" which can lead otherwise well-intentioned men astray in a complex world and time. In 1967 Theodore White did a three-part article for *Life* magazine entitled "The Action Intellectuals." He traced the careers of two generations of intellectuals who left their campuses to answer the call to government service in Roosevelt's New Deal and the Kennedy-Johnson Great Society administrations. The article ended on a note of caution and a quote from Thucydides. "It was," he said, "frequently a misfortune to have very brilliant men in charge of affairs; they expect too much of ordinary men."<sup>37</sup> This article is not a call for anti-intellectualism. It is simply the expression of a visceral instinct that while we are open to ideas, we should be critical in evaluation of their content and especially suspicious of clever purveyors of "new" ideas.

On the subject of discipline, recent events have forced professions other than the military to take stock of their professional ethics. But the basic lesson is still the same. Judge Charles E. Wyzanski, senior judge of the US District Court of Boston, in a recent lecture at Stanford University, expressed it as follows:

It's almost inconceivable that people will be moral unless at some time they have been subject to discipline . . . not physical discipline necessarily but self-discipline through the threat of the withdrawal of love or approval . . . Without discipline it is not unlikely people will be governed by much beyond the pleasure principle . . . teachers, jurists, educational institutions must all strive to move people from where they are to something higher.<sup>38</sup>

The military profession can make a significant contribution to the solution of our country's problems, problems so complex that they require a truly interdisciplinary approach. We have seen that the habits of disciplined conduct in response to high ethical standards are a decided asset in today's world. If for no other reason, they set a positive example for others who may be trying to rise above the level of consensus morality. Finally, in the course of his professional life, the soldier has learned to deal successfully with "ordinary men," no small asset if we expect to get things done instead of merely talking about them. But there will be the cry that the regimented methods of solving military problems are not appropriate in a free society. I submit that as people become more and more interdependent our society will become less and less "free" in the sense of rugged individualism." Individuals will increasingly have to sacrifice freedom of action in the interest of the common good. This need not be a depressing thought if we take seriously the concept of the human family and the brotherhood of man.

Nor are such conservative ideas as the need for more order and discipline in society necessarily contrary to our liberal traditions in America. Louis Hartz describes the development of the liberal tradition in America as a natural phenomenon that is basically irrational and without philosophical basis. He sees the basic ethical problem being the danger of unanimity or what Tocqueville called the "tyranny of opinion." In recent years this has developed into a form of mainstream Americanism that makes no distinctions among philosophical principles as long as they can all be reduced to a common denominator of pragmatism.<sup>39</sup> In such a situation there is not only room for, but a critical need for, alternative value systems. The same concern for the two-party system applies even more to the vital requirement for pluralism in philosophical thought. Huntington's suggestion that the military profession can bring an outlook of "conservative realism" to the councils of government would be a step in the right direction even if the country is not prepared to accept the idea of the Army as the modern man's monastery.<sup>40</sup> In the title essay of the book, *Military Honor After My Lai*, written 15 years after Huntington's book, Wilson Carey McWilliams expresses some of these same ideas as follows:

Obviously to ask America to dismantle the "liberal tradition" of "irrational Lockeanism" that has served her in place of either morality or thought is to demand a difficult, perhaps impossible task. But anything less may involve political and moral disaster. We may have few resources but our position is not hopeless. Blacks have helped set millions of whites free in America: the few can move the many if they speak to things which are true in the nature of humankind. And perhaps the Army may, in its own interest, help to free civilian America to rediscover its own honor.<sup>41</sup>

Such a philosophical role in society would quickly attract criticism, but we should neither fear criticism nor seek sympathy as long as we believe we are doing what is right. Sir John Hackett gives us the clue to the proper posture in the face of undeserved criticism—calm good humor:

The soldier can be thought of as one of deVigny's great shaggy dogs of grenadiers, mournful, sweet tempered and doomed. He has been romanticized, reviled, esteemed and derided. He has been the target of some of the best invective, Voltaire's for example, or Shaw's. . . . Shaw is as angry as Voltaire and for the same reason man obstinately remains what he is and declines to become what the radical reformer thinks he ought to be. The very existence of the profession of arms is a constant reminder that this is so and the rancor it sometimes arouses in the radical breast is easily understood.<sup>42</sup>

Such a role of being in society but not of it is a difficult one to play. We are all men and therefore, bear fallibilities and weaknesses. We are sustained in our effort by some source of strength outside of ourselves. One such source of strength is to be found in the corporate nature of our profession. We are, or should be, a "band of brothers," united in the pursuit of a common body of professional knowledge and skill, together in our willingness to make the sacrifices necessary to adhere to exemplary standards of ethical conduct, and sharing the unlimited liability of the soldier's contract. But, in the final analysis, the strength to persevere in the pursuit of excellence must come from within each individual. Some may characterize their guiding principle by the familiar motto, "to thine own self be true"—the old shaving mirror test. Others may account for their perseverance as the results of a traditional prayer to a traditional God. In any case, serving and growing in a worthwhile cause should provide all the meaning and fulfillment to life for which a reasonable man can hope.

## Notes

1. Following are conclusions drawn from responses to a questionnaire distributed to senior officers (representing all services) who were members of the Naval Warfare Class of 1973, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.

- Most officers associate their technical skills with "professionalism," but many also include intangible values such as dedication to duty or country.
- Most officers do not believe that rank is a measure of professionalism, although several believe it should be.
- To improve our professional status, 22 recommended study, 13 called for closer adherence to our code of ethics, and 10 believed just plain hard work was the answer.

2. Bernard Barber, "Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions," in *The Professions in America*, ed. Kenneth S. Lynn et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 18.

3. Everett C. Hughes, "Professions," in *The Professions in America*, 1-2.

4. Ibid., 3.

5. Barber, 19.

6. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 11.

7. Ibid.

8. Sir John W. Hackett, *The Profession of Arms* (London: Times Publishing, 1962), 63.

9. John W. Masland and Laurence J. Radway, *Soldiers and Scholars* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), 3.

10. Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1960), 418-24.

11. Morris Janowitz, "Military Elites and the Study of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 1, no. 1 (March 1957): 9.

12. Alain C. Enthoven, "Choosing Strategies and Selecting Weapon Systems," United States Naval Institute *Proceedings*, January 1964, 153.

13. David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972), 214.

14. "The Particular Tragedy of Robert McNamara," *Time*, 5 July 1971, 21.

15. Henry E. Eccles, *Military Concepts and Philosophy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965), v.p.

16. Henry E. Eccles, "Military Theory, a Topical Structural Outline" (Unpublished paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, R.I.: 1971), 31.

17. G. I. Marcus, *The Age of Nelson* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 11.

18. Ward Just, *Military Men* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 241.

19. Eccles, *Military Concepts*, 116.

20. Hughes, 3.

21. Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 479-81.

22. Ibid., 484-85.

23. Ibid., 486-87.

24. Ibid., 492-93.

25. Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism, Civilian and Military*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1959), 13.

26. Huntington, 317.

27. Ibid., 326-27.

28. Vagts, 493.

29. Roger A. Leonard, ed., *A Short Guide to Clausewitz on War* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1967), 105-6.

30. Bruce Catton, *U. S. Grant and the American Military Tradition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954) 55-56.

31. Ibid., 57-58.

32. Ibid., 129.

33. Douglas S. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants, a Study in Command*, vol. 3, *Gettysburg to Appomattox* (New York: Scribner, 1944), 752.

34. Department of the Navy, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Manual* (Washington, D.C.: 1961), 5-11, 5-12.

35. Letter from Commandant of the Marine Corps to All General Officers and All Commanding Officers, "Professionalism," A01-kb, Washington, D.C.: 28 March 1970, 1.

36. Huntington, 16-17.

37. Theodore H. White, "The Action Intellectuals," *Life*, 23 June 1967, 85.

38. Charles E. Wyzanski quoted in *Parade*, the Sunday Newspaper Magazine, 19 May 1974, 22.

39. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955), n.p.

40. Huntington, 79.

41. Wilson C. McWilliams, *Military Honor After My Lai* (New York: Council on Religious and International Affairs, 1972), 32.

42. Hackett, 63-64.